UNITED NATIONS

EP

Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.
GENERAL

UNEP/GC.18/29
19 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Eighteenth session
Nairobi, 15-26 May 1995
Item 4(c) of the provisional agenda*

POLICY ISSUES: COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS

Cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

Summary

Cooperation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS) (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the environmental aspects of policies, planning and management of human settlements has increased considerably since (UNCHS) (Habitat) and UNEP jointly prepared the Environmental Guidelines for Settlements Planning and Management one decade ago. During the reporting period, the pace of cooperation has accelerated to include current worldwide joint operations in the Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP), the Joint Task Force on the Continuum from Relief to Development, the Joint Task Force on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and support for the preparation for the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Governing Council may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 14/3 of 18 June 1987, in which it requested the Executive Director to continue to increase cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), inter alia, in the four areas identified by the seventh joint meeting of the Executive Director of the Programme and the Bureau of its Governing Council with the Executive Director of the Centre and the Bureau of the Commission on Human Settlements,

---

* UNEP/GC.18/1.

Na.95-0203 250395 260395

/...

Recalling also its decisions 16/21 of 31 May 1991 and 17/10 of 21 May 1993 on cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat),

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 40/199 of 17 December 1985 on cooperation between the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme,

Having considered the report of the Executive Director on cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat),

(a) Takes note, with satisfaction, of the increased cooperation between the organizations;

(b) Requests the Executive Director to continue her efforts to intensify such cooperation, particularly in relation to the Sustainable Cities Programme and associated areas included in the proposed Programme of Utilization of Resources of the Environment Fund for the Biennium 1996-1997.

Areas of Cooperation

Sustainable Cities Programme

1. With regard to joint activities in SCP especially, it has been generally agreed that UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) can realize unique scientific, technical, and financial complementarities. Efforts are now underway to implement these recommendations and make SCP a truly joint facility of UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP.

2. Cooperation between (UNCHS) (Habitat) and UNEP in the area of environmentally-sound technologies is taking place in the context of a number of joint programmes initiated by relevant UNCHS (Habitat) programmes and UNEP operational units. The UNCHS (Habitat) SCP is cooperating with the following UNEP units and in the listed localities:

(a) The Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre (IE/PAC), in Paris, in the context of the Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level (APELL) and Cleaner Production programmes, with joint activities in Concepción (Chile), the Upper Silesia industrial agglomeration (Poland), and Dakar (Senegal);

(b) The Oceans and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre (OCA/PAC), in Dakar, Concepción, Dar es Salaam and, possibly, Mozambique;

(c) The Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS) Air Programme, in Dar es Salaam and Madras (India) (planned);

(d) The Freshwater Unit, in Concepción; and

(e) The International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC), in China, Poland and Chile.

3. UNCHS (Habitat) launched SCP in August 1990 as a follow-up to the UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Environmental Guidelines for Settlements Planning and Management, and in response to the Commission on Human Settlements resolution 12/18 of 2 May 1989 on sustainable development and human settlements and to resolution 12/20 of 2 May 1989 on increased cooperation with UNEP. The aim of SCP is to provide municipal authorities and their partners in the public, private, and community

sectors with an improved environmental planning and management capacity. SCP demonstration projects result in broad-based environmental strategies, priority capital-investment projects and strengthened urban management capacities. SCP assists in mobilizing all the public and private sector actors whose cooperation is required for successful implementation of demonstration projects. As a global programme, SCP promotes the sharing of know-how between cities in different regions of the world and, as an interorganizational effort, SCP mobilizes technical and financial resources from both bilateral and multilateral sources.

4. As was reported to the seventeenth session of the Governing Council of UNEP and to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, UNEP has continued to collaborate with (UNCHS) (Habitat) in the development of remote sensing and geographic information system (GIS) techniques for application to urban environmental management. This has been accomplished with support from the Government of Sweden and in the framework of the UNCHS (Habitat)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/World Bank Urban Management Programme (UMP). The joint activities resulted, in a UMP publication, "Urban application of satellite remote sensing and GIS analysis". The techniques have been applied in two SCP demonstration projects, one at Dar es Salaam and the other at Ismailia (Egypt).

5. To enhance the operational relevance of the UNEP/World Health Organization/GEMS-Air Programme further, it has been agreed to use SCP as a vehicle for applying the air-quality monitoring technology developed by GEMS-Air over the past 15 years to urban management decision-making. Joint operational activities are now being conducted under the Dar-es-Salaam sustainable cities project and are planned in other sustainable cities demonstrations, such as those in Poland (the Upper Silesia industrial agglomeration) and India (Madras).

6. As a result of high government demand and strong donor interest, SCP continued to gain momentum during 1993-1994 and is currently operational in several countries throughout the world, including Chile, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Poland, Senegal, Tunisia and United Republic of Tanzania. During the biennium, SCP has become a vehicle for inter-organizational cooperation. As a follow-up to the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), SCP will be used as a major programme for implementing the various recommendations of Agenda 21, related to human health (chapter 6), sustainable human settlements (chapter 7), drinking-supply and sanitation (chapter 18) and local authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21 (chapter 28).

International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC)

7. IETC and SCP have embarked upon two field projects, in China and Poland, to assist in the identification of local needs for technology transfer through the development of a local Agenda 21 in cities where environmental degradation has reached serious levels.

8. In China, Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning Province, has been selected as the site of the first project because of its heavy industrialization and high rates of pollution. This activity has now expanded to include the city of Wuhan.

9. In Poland, the joint activity is aimed at the development of a local Agenda 21 for the Upper Silesian agglomeration (Katowice). The region contains a cluster of cities with an aggregate population of 2.3 million. Following the completion of an environmental profile of the city and the first city consultation, IETC is specifically contributing expertise in the area of drinking water, waste disposal and environmental health.

Task Force on the Relief to Development Continuum

10. A Joint UNCHS (Habitat)/UNEP Task Force on the Continuum from Relief to Development was established on 22 October 1993. Several activities were undertaken in 1994:

(a) The preparation of a publication on disaster-related activities, joint expertise and experience of UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP;

(b) An International Workshop on Human Settlements and Environmental Strategies for action in the Continuum from Relief to Development in May 1994;

(c) The preparation of the final report of the International Workshop on Human Settlements and Environmental Strategies for action in the Continuum from Relief to Development;

(d) The Chairman of the Task Force represented both UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, Japan, 23-27 May 1994;

(e) A joint assessment mission was sent to Rwanda in September 1994;

(f) A project was prepared and approved for the reconstruction, rehabilitation and cleaning-up of Kigali. This project has been financed by UNDP with UNCHS (Habitat) as the executing and UNEP as the associate executing agency.

11. New terms of reference for the Task Force have been agreed by both organizations and it is anticipated that joint activities will increase in the next biennium, particularly in the area of rapid response to complex emergencies where the specialized expertise of UNEP and UNCHS (Habitat) can contribute to and complement the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), UNDP and other field agencies.

Task Force on Small Island Developing States

12. A joint UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Task Force on Small Island Developing States was established at the request of the Executive Director of UNEP in order to coordinate activities in support of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

13. A letter of agreement between UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP will initiate arrangements for the joint organization by the UNEP Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre (OCA/PAC) of a series of regional workshops and seminars on the impact of climate change on coastal population and human settlements. The letter of agreement envisages a three-phase activity comprising: phase 1 - Preparation of background documents for regional workshops in 1994; phase 2 - Convening of the first workshop for the Eastern African region in 1995; and phase 3 - Expansion of cooperation by holding other regional workshops (1995-1996).

14. The following factors have been considered in the establishment of a cooperative framework which UNCHS (Habitat), OCA/PAC and the Global Resource Information Database (GRID) have agreed to develop joint programming for integrated coastal area planning and management in the following areas:

(a) Increased concern worldwide about the threats to marine resources for coastal areas;

(b) Recognition that two thirds of the world population live within some 100 km of the world's coastlines and their number is expected to double within thirty years;

(c) The internationally expressed desire to enhance development without environmental degradation in coastal areas at all levels;

(d) Awareness, in the light of prevailing financial constraints, that duplication of funding and efforts must be avoided;

(e) Recognition that the activities and initiatives of UNEP OCA/PAC, UNEP GRID and UNCHS (Habitat) are in many ways complementary and mutually supportive.

15. UNEP, UNDP and UNCHS (Habitat) jointly developed a project activity which integrated economic development, physical (land-use) and marine and coastal resource planning for the British Virgin Islands. It is innovative in its approach to integrated island and coastal area management and provides a model for UNEP/UNDP/UNCHS (Habitat) involvement in joint activities.

Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control

16. The WHO/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)/UNEP/UNCHS (Habitat) Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control (PEEM) provides an additional framework for UNCHS (Habitat) and UNEP to cooperate on the problems of vector-borne diseases in rural, peri-urban and urban areas. A recent evaluation of the programme will make recommendations on the way in which PEEM can respond more directly to the needs of the affected population and help to translate the findings into operational activities.

Preparations for Habitat II

17. With regard to UNEP assistance to UNCHS (Habitat) in the preparations for Habitat II, support has been provided in a number of areas. In the first place, a Professional staff member has been seconded from UNEP to the UNCHS (Habitat) secretariat to assist in the preparations for the conference. Second, a major publication entitled "World Resources 1966-1997" is being prepared by the World Resources Institute on behalf of UNEP for Habitat II. Third, preparatory work is in progress on the production of a series of case studies documenting the role of local authorities in implementing Agenda 21. The completed work will be published as a book and presented as a contribution to Habitat II. Fourth, subject to the availability of resources, it is planned to sponsor an exhibition at the conference on the best practices in urban environmental management. This will build on the experience from SCP reflecting successful examples of the practical application of sustainable urban development principles.

18. Since Habitat II will take place in Turkey in June 1996, it has been decided that World Environment Day will be commemorated during the conference in Istanbul to demonstrate the full commitment of UNEP to its success, and as a further supporting contribution.